Cultist, 84, Ready to Die for Jones

Reuter

GEORGETOWN, Guyana, Nov. 23—An 84-year-old member of the Peoples Temple who narrowly avoided becoming part of last weekend's mass suicide, said today he remained ready to die for the group's leader, Jim Jones.

"I was always willing to die for him in his defense," said Megal de Peana from his hospital bed here. Pointing to his heart, he added: "They can come and shoot me now."

De Peana, a Portuguese who moved to the United Sstates 64 years ago, was brought out of Jonestown before last Saturday's macabre events to be treated for rheumatism. He said he thought his wife Lovey, 78, was probably among the dead.